

and dedication to his community are evident in the dynamic growth and development the city of Laredo has recently experienced. I want to send sincere thanks and best wishes to him, his wife Josie and the entire family for exceptional service.

SPEECH OF DEPUTY SECRETARY  
OF DEFENSE, RUDY DE LEON

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to submit into the record a speech by Deputy Secretary of Defense Rudy de Leon. This speech takes a look at the state of America's military, its accomplishments over the last decade, its challenges in recruiting and retaining the best people, and the realities we face in building the next generation of our fighting force.

Perhaps most importantly, Secretary de Leon does a superb job of illustrating the success that can come from Congress and the Administration working together. In the areas of defense and foreign policy, we must never divert from our traditional approach: that politics must stop at the water's edge.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will never deviate from that wisdom. Over the last eight years, the President and the Congress have come together in the area of defense policy, and the results have been stupendous. I know from my own experiences on the Armed Services Committee how valuable a bipartisan approach is, and I thank Secretary de Leon for articulating the concepts so well.

REMARKS BY DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
RUDY DE LEON, DEFENSE ORIENTATION CON-  
FERENCE ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 4, 2000

Donald Bickle [DOCA President], John Olsen [DOCA Vice President], thank you both for the opportunity to join you today, for your leadership of this outstanding organization and for your service to this nation. John was in the Air Force and Donald was in the Navy during both the Second World War and Korea. We are grateful to you both. Members of the Board, members of DOCA and spouses, ladies and gentlemen.

First, allow me to begin with two simple words to every one of you. Thank you. Most of you will recall a time not so long ago when virtually every American had a family member or a friend in uniform and when what Tom Brokaw calls the Greatest Generation shared the lessons of their lives with the generations that followed.

Today, in an era when the military is smaller and less visible in our society, you—the members of that Greatest Generation—have been a bridge like no other. As informed observers with experience and insights into the military, and as respected and powerful voices within your communities, you have been in a unique position to help the nation understand the sacrifices and needs of our sons and daughters in uniform. And that is why I wanted to speak to you today.

I thought I might begin this morning by painting two pictures, pulled directly from recent headlines and world events, that capture a fundamental truth of our time.

The first picture is of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. It is a picture of an entire people standing up and speaking out, of workers putting down their tools and walking out of their factories, of truckers and taxi drivers blockading roads, and of tens of thousands of average citizens taking to the streets to demand that their votes be counted and that the dictator who brought such misery and death to an entire region be ousted. And as this drama unfolds, the world hopes that a long, bloody chapter in the history of Europe might perhaps be coming to an end.

The second picture is from a world away on the Korean Peninsula. It is a picture of the leaders of North and South meeting for the first time and of a historic ceremony to cut through the DMZ—the world's most fortified border—with a reopened railway and a historic highway along which trade will travel. It is a picture of families reuniting in tearful embraces after a half-century of separation and of North and South Korean athletes marching into the Olympic stadium in Sydney under a common flag for the first time. And as this drama unfolds, the world hopes that a long, sad chapter of division in Asia might perhaps be coming to an end.

As different as these two pictures are, as distinct as the histories that have propelled these two nations to this epic moment, they share a common thread. Both would have been impossible without the presence, the persistence, and the determination of the United States Armed Forces and our allies. Both remind us of the powerful forces of freedom that can be unleashed by the stabilizing presence of the American military around the world.

So there's no more fitting time than now to consider how we reached this moment and to consider the great questions that will continue to face our nation in the future. What should our role be in the 21st Century? Is America's military ready? And how can we ensure that our forces can meet the immediate crises of today while at the same time, modernizing to meet the emerging threats of tomorrow?

These are valid and profound questions for our nation. They demand thoughtful and honest answers. When it comes to America's Armed Forces, we need a candid and comprehensive portrait of the state of our military. And that is what I want to discuss with you this afternoon.

Military readiness is a function of many factors, including the overall level of defense spending; the quality and quantity of those we recruit and retain; the capabilities of their equipment; and, finally, their ability to fulfill the missions we ask of them. To understand each of these is to understand the state of America's military at the dawn of the 21st Century.

First, there is the spending this nation devotes to our men and women in uniform. I think if we look over our shoulders at the past decade, we see that there have been several great revolutions that have had a tremendous impact on our country and the world at large.

There is the revolution in global affairs, most notably the collapse of the Soviet Union. With all the benefits of the Cold War's end came the burdens of being the world's sole superpower. As General [Hugh] Shelton [Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff] outlined to you this morning, soon we had fewer military personnel facing more missions, combining to levy unprecedented demands on our military men and women.

Then there is the revolution in technology with its daily digital leaps that are trans-

forming everything from how we communicate, to how we learn, to how we understand our universe. As Secretary [of Defense William] Cohen has said, information can indeed be the great equalizer, placing enormous power in the hands of the common citizen or consumer. At the same time, information can also be the great destabilizer, placing enormous and deadly power in the hands of those who wish us harm. And so we now also face the prospect of hackers launching daily assaults on our defense systems and our critical infrastructure.

At the same time, there has been a revolution in demographics. Those born between 1965 and 1979—the so-called "Generation X"—comprise one of the smallest groups of 18–22 year olds, and, therefore, the smallest pool of potential recruits, since we started the All Volunteer Force in the 1970s. While the next wave—so-called "Generation Y"—is considerably larger, it won't start having a major impact on recruiting until at least 2003.

And then there is the revolution in our domestic financial affairs. We have balanced the budget and have eliminated deficits as a drain on our national security. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the decline in military spending did not start with the end of the Cold War. Rather, it started several years before with efforts to reduce the deficit—specifically the Gramm-Rudman Deficit Reduction Act—in the late 1980s.

Ten years ago when I was staff director of the House Armed Service Committee, and eight years ago when I entered the Pentagon, the overwhelming reality was the enormous budget deficit that hung over our heads. Few dared even think about real growth in spending or investment.

Today, we have achieved a sea-change in our financial affairs. Because of hard economic decisions and deficit reduction, and because of the roaring economy, these decisions helped to unleash, those record deficits have now turned into record surpluses.

That surplus has now allowed us to do something many through unlikely, if not impossible, even only a few years ago. With the President and Secretary of Defense working with the Congress, we are now making new investments in our military men and women totaling some \$180 billion in just the last two years—the largest sustained increase in defense spending in fifteen years.

Consider the second measure by which to measure readiness—the quality and quantity of those we recruit and retain. The dynamic economy is pulling away many potential recruits and many of our highly skilled people. So we faced the twin challenges of too many people leaving the force and too few people entering the force.

That's why a significant part of that \$180 billion increase in defense spending is going toward dramatic improvements in quality of life. With respect to pay, all our men and women have now received the largest pay raise since the early 1980s. Others with special skills and many in their mid-careers have received additional raises and bonuses on top of that, some as much as 5 percent more.

With respect to benefits, we have made dramatic changes. We have fixed and improved military retirement, restoring benefits so our people can once again retire with 50 percent of their pay after 20 years of service and have a powerful incentive to stay in the force longer.

With respect to housing, we're making progress as well. I know that some of you visited Travis Air Force Base in August, where you saw substandard housing in an

area where the basic housing allowance we provide our forces sometimes isn't enough to match the high cost of living. Well, we've modified the allowance to better reflect the actual cost of off-base housing. And now we're making a truly historic change. This year, we are going to reduce from 19 percent to 15 percent what many of our people pay out of pocket for off-base housing. Within five years, we plan to eliminate those expenses entirely and we're going to devote \$3 billion to do it.

With respect to health care, we have made, and will continue to make, improvements in an area that consistently ranks among the top concerns of our forces and their families. I know that in March some of you visited Fort Sam Houston in Texas, home to the U.S. Army Medical Command. Our TRICARE health system is now fully operational in the continental United States, and our service members and their families rate the quality of care they receive as very high. Our next major challenge is ensuring we provide care that is accessible and hassle-free. That's why we will soon be implementing important changes to lower the health care costs for active duty service members and their families, and to expand coverage for family members.

But just like the nation as a whole, we're grappling with sky-rocketing health care costs and a growing population of older Americans—our retired veterans. So Congress is about to pass—with the Administration's support—an expansion of a pharmacy benefit so that our military retirees can afford the cost of their prescription drugs. Health care will continue to be a hard issue, but we will continue to work hard with Congress in keep faith with our retired veterans who served their country so nobly. And Secretary Cohen and particularly General Shelton, continue to work with Congress in this area.

In many ways our force is only as strong as the families behind it. And because so many of our personnel are also parents, we've also devoted tremendous time and attention to ensuring strong military families. As a result, our schools recently led the nation in a national survey on writing, with our overseas schools coming in second to only one state, and our stateside schools coming in year. In recent years, students in our schools have scored well above the national average at all grade levels and in all subjects.

At the same time, by adding \$190 million to child care programs over the past six years, we now have a child care system that has been described by many, including the New York Times, as "a model for the nation."

Thanks to all these efforts to improve quality life, we're now witnessing some important improvements in retention. However, it's not only the fundamental rewards that keep our people in uniform, it's the personal reward of doing the job they were trained to do. In fact, those soldiers serving in places like the Balkans have some of the highest re-enlistment rates in our armed forces. The services have already worked to relieve the stress of current operations. In the future, our challenge will be to ensure that the stress on our forces and their families doesn't turn that motivation to serve into a motivation to leave.

We want our forces to stay because they by almost every measure, the quality of our men and women is higher than it's ever been. With more of the force staying in the service for longer than 10 years, they are more experienced than ever. With more high school diplomas and more advanced degrees to their

name, they are more educated than ever. So while very real challenges remain in keeping quality people, America needs to know what General Shelton told the U.S. Senate last week and perhaps again to you today. He said, "In my 37 years in uniform, I have never been around better soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines."

Our efforts to improve quality of life have also improved recruiting. In addition to the demographic revolution and lure of the private sector I mentioned, the causes [of our recruiting challenge] are many. They include the ever-increasing value of a college education and the ever-increasing availability of tuition assistance that has now made college available to virtually every high school graduate who wants to attend.

So what did we do when we wanted to recruit more young people? We put more recruiters on the streets. We created higher bonuses for enlistment. We increased educational incentives. And we tailored advertising and more spending to reach out to young people.

As a result, we're now seeing a real turnaround in recruitment. Just last week, the Army enlisted its 80,000th soldier for the fiscal year ending September. Shortfalls indeed remain in some areas like naval flight officers and computer specialists. But for the first time in three years, every service not only met their active duty recruiting goal, they exceeded them, and not only in terms of quantity, but in terms of quality as well. For example, over 90% of our recruits hold high school diplomas, much higher than the national average. So while challenges remain, America needs to know that we're still recruiting the best and brightest this nation has to offer.

Of course, just as important as the quality of our men and women, is the third measure of readiness—the quality of their equipment. The end of the Cold War was a time of transition for our force. But by 1997 we knew that a 13-year decline in procurement spending would have to end. So we ended it. As General Shelton noted to you this morning, this year we achieved our \$60 billion in annual funding for the new weapons, tools and technologies our warriors need. Over the next five years we plan to increase that to \$70 billion. And in the years beyond, building the advanced force of the future means that procurement will have to remain a national priority.

That's why we are investing in the next generation of aircraft. We're investing \$38 billion for the revolutionary V-22 Osprey that takes off and lands like a helicopter but flies like an airplane, allowing our forces to be more mobile. We're investing \$45 billion for the massive C-17 transport that carries more cargo to less accessible places, like those airfields in Albania during the air war over Kosovo. We're investing \$62 billion for the F-22 that will ensure our supremacy of the skies for decades to come. And over the long-term, we're investing in our largest acquisition program, the Joint Strike Fighter.

America needs to know that all this investment is fueling an unprecedented Revolution in Military Affairs. Indeed, it's not enough to spend more, we also have to spend smarter. And we're doing both.

The Navy is improving the capabilities of its ships and aircraft, increasing their striking power by tying them together with the most sophisticated technologies.

The Air Force is transforming itself into an expeditionary force and—as the world saw in Kosovo—making greater use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles that reduce the risk to pilots

and increase our intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities.

The Marines are revolutionizing their capabilities by honing their skills in urban warfare.

And, of course, the Army has embarked on a historic transformation to dramatically enhance the speed, mobility, and firepower of our soldiers. That's why we worked with Congress to secure more than \$7 billion for the next four years to propel that transformation, including more than \$4 billion for Interim Armored Vehicles that will be more agile and lethal on the battlefield than anything our soldiers have today. We're also investing \$48 billion in the lighter and more lethal Comanche helicopter.

America needs to know that we're also transforming the Defense Department to better support this new military. We created the Joint Forces command in Norfolk to improve the ability of the services to operate together and to experiment with the most advanced technologies and tactics. We created a Defense Threat Reduction Agency to pull together our counter-proliferation efforts. We created a special task force to advise and assist communities should a chemical or biological weapon ever be used on American soil. And we created another task force to defend our computer systems as part of our normal warfighting mission. As different as all these efforts may be, the result is the same—our men and women will be safer and our military will be stronger.

I've mentioned many of the investments we're making in our military. But I would suggest that just as important as what we should be spending is what we should not be spending. Consider the money lost to inefficiencies within the Defense Department itself. That's why we began a Defense Reform Initiative that is now saving us tens of billions of dollars.

Consider the money wasted on excess infrastructure. As a result of the four rounds of base realignment and closure to date, we expect to save more than \$25 billion by the year 2003. Those of you who visited Kelly Air Force Base in March know how base closure, if done right, can mean the opening of new prosperity. The country and the Congress need to know that we can't build a lean, agile 21st Century military if it's dragged down by an oversized, outdated 20th Century infrastructure. The country and the Congress need to know that two more rounds of BRAC would save us \$3 billion a year, billions that could be better spent on our forces and their families.

Which brings me to the fourth and final measure of readiness I want to address—and perhaps the most important of all—the ability of our men and women to complete the missions we ask of them. As you know from your visits to bases and installations around the country, and as the Joint Chiefs told Congress last week, and which I believe General Shelton reiterated to you this morning, our front-line units—the first to fight in the event of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula or in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans—are capable. Our forces can fulfill our strategy of fighting two major theater wars. And in the future, we should experience an increasing trend in readiness.

And so if the question is asked, "Is America's military ready if we call?" We need only look to the times when we have called them.

Those of you who went to Guatemala last year know that when Hurricane Mitch ripped across Central America, America's military was ready. As General [Charlie] Wilhelm

[then Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Southern Command] told you, the millions of tons of food and supplies that U.S. forces flew in and gave out saved countless lives and helped to literally rebuild entire regions from the ground up.

When Slobodan Milosevic unleashed a wave of terror in Kosovo last year, America's military was ready. We had soldiers in neighboring countries preventing a wider war and airlifting tons of food and supplies to save thousands of Kosovar refugees. We had sailors and marines on ships and submarines in the Adriatic, and naval aviators flying into those dangerous Balkans skies. And we had airmen engaging in the most precise campaign in the history of air power. They conducted the vast majority of those 38,000 NATO sorties. They took to the skies for 78 days with only two planes lost and not a single combat casualty. And while that record was not achieved without stress on certain assets, that is a historic achievement of which our forces and the American people should be enormously proud.

Indeed, the true measure of America's military is the job they do every day. In short, America needs to know that the U.S. Armed Forces are the best trained, best educated, best led, most respected and finest fighting force the world has ever seen.

So in closing, I want to recite a page from America's past that I believe points the way to ensuring our military strength in the future. Half a century ago, this nation stood at the hinge of history, an unprecedented time of both promise and peril. There was the promise, our victory in the Second World War. But there was also the peril, a dawning Cold War. And America's very survival demanded that we think anew and act anew. And so to navigate the shoals of the century that lay ahead, Arthur Vandenberg, a Republican Senator from Michigan, joined with Harry Truman, a Democratic President from Missouri, and the nation came together around a common foreign and defense policy to defend freedom and to create a Marshall Plan and an alliance called NATO that would eventually win the Cold War.

Today, in the long wake of our triumph in that long struggle, America again stands at the hinge of history. Again there is the promise, of the world's sole economic and military superpower. Again there is the peril, the new threats of this new century. And to chart the nation's course in our time, William Cohen, a Republican Senator from Maine, joined with Bill Clinton, a Democratic President from Arkansas, to help restore a spirit of bi-partisanship to defense policy and to ensure that when it comes to our men and women in uniform, politics does indeed stop at the water's edge.

Ladies and gentlemen, in recent years we have recognized that truth. We have worked with Congress to support and strengthen our military. We have upheld our sacred pledge to care for America's sons and daughters who wear this nation's uniform. That is the message I wanted to bring to you today. That is the message I hope you carry back to your communities and the country. Thank you very much.

## HONORING THE GRAND OLE OPRY IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

### HON. BOB CLEMENT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, today I honor a sacred historic institution, the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary as the longest continuously running live radio show in the world. The Opry and its colorful cast of characters are known and loved by individuals across the globe.

As a native Nashvillian, born and reared in Music City USA, I truly appreciate the significance of country music and its influence on so many people. Country music and its cousins, bluegrass, folk, gospel, blues and rockabilly, truly have captured the heart and soul of our great nation, offering songs that spring from the fabric of America. Country lyrics espouse our history, our faith in God, our love of family, and our appreciation for the value of freedom and hard work. With these melodies and themes, country music appeals to listeners of all ages and from all walks of life.

To honor and highlight the significance of country music, in 1990, I sponsored and passed legislation designating October as Country Music Month. Now Country Music Month and Country Music Week are nationally recognized events each year, celebrated by millions of individuals.

The Opry has inspired a country music fan fair phenomenon; been the focus of a theme park, hotel complex, television networks, magazines, and movies; infused the tourism industry in Tennessee; and given us an incredible amount of memorable music. Yet, the Opry's beginnings were humble.

In 1925, the "solemn old judge" George D. Hay moved from Chicago's WLS Barn Dance to Nashville, where he began broadcasting and hosting the show that would later become the Grand Ole Opry. Hay eventually would coin the phrase, "Grand Ole Opry" about the program, instantly giving it a name that would endure forever. With WSM's strong 100,000-watt clear channel signal, the Opry could be heard for hundreds of miles across the United States by thousands of people. As the show brought performers of traditional music to the stage, a new genre of music was officially born—country music.

Those early 1920s Opry performers included mainly instrumental talents such as banjo player Uncle Dave Macon and harmonica player Deford Bailey. In the 1930s and 40s, vocalists such as the "King of Country Music" Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, and Bill Monroe all took the stage, as did comedienne Minnie Pearl.

As the years passed, the talent pool grew and the NBC Network picked up the show. Such big names as Patsy Cline, Flatt and Scruggs, Hank Snow, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Jim Reeves, Red Foley, Marty Robbins, Martha Carson, Kitty Wells, Johnny Wright, Bill Anderson, Connie Smith, Dolly Parton, Porter Wagoner, Garth Brooks, Pam Tillis, Trisha

Yearwood, and Alison Krauss all have called the Opry stage home. These artists represent just a fraction of the bright and talented performers to grace the stage since its inception, whether at the War Memorial Auditorium, the Ryman Auditorium, or the Grand Ole Opry House of today.

My family has enjoyed an ongoing relationship with the Grand Ole Opry over the years. In fact my father, Governor Frank Clement, enjoyed strong friendships with many Opry members, often enlisting their talents for political rallies across the state. In addition, Governor Clement traveled to Washington and testified on behalf of country music when its lyrics were under fire by Congress in the 1950s.

Like any sacred institution, the Opry has endured sorrow, grief, and loss. It has faced adversity and strain. There have been joyous times and laughter. But the Opry has endured throughout each season. In the 1980s, George Jones touched our hearts as he sang, "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes" about the legacy of country music and its legendary artists. Jones singled out performers such as Lefty Frizzell, Merle Haggard, Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Willie Nelson, and Roy Acuff in the tune. He also mentioned the Opry in the song lyrics, inspiring a new generation of country artists to carry the torch. I'd particularly like to recognize the contributions of Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart, and WSM announcer Eddie Stubbs for promoting the cause of traditional music and educating the next generation about our rich heritage in this new millennium.

Throughout the years the Opry and its cast of performers, announcers, advertisers, and musicians have inspired and entertained us each Friday and Saturday night. For these valued contributions and cherished memories we are forever grateful to the Opry and those who have called it "home." We salute the Grand Ole Opry for 75 wonderful years and offer our sincerest wishes for continuous success in the years to come.

Thank you and God bless you.

## HONORING OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL WINNER STACY DRAGILA

### HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize a native of my congressional district who has brought glory and honor to herself, her family, and her fellow Americans. I wish to congratulate Stacy Dragila on recently winning the gold medal in the first-ever Olympic Women's Pole Vault Competition.

Dragila grew up in Auburn, California, where she competed in goat roping as a child. As a heptathlete during her years on Placer High School's track and field team, she had little idea that she would one day stand atop the Olympic medals podium as a pole vault champion. You see, when she was in high school, the pole vault was an event in which only male competitors took part.

As the women's pole vault has finally taken root in the United States, Stacy has quickly